

FAIR CEYLON, THE HOME OF THE ELEPHANT

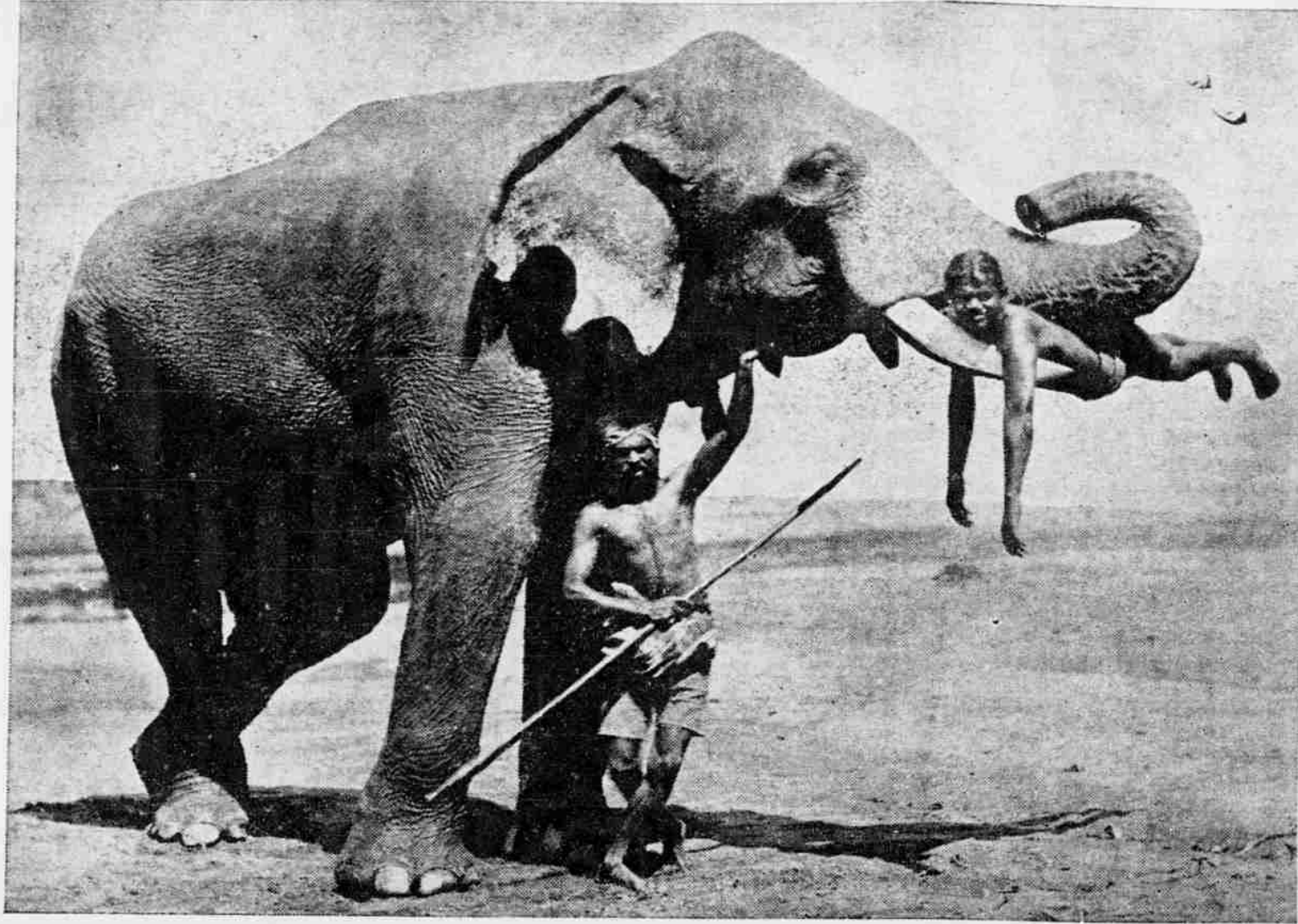
Massive Lords of the Forest Trained to Work.

COLOMBO—Ceylon is the native heath of the elephant. The huge beasts which are such a source of awe and wonder to Young America on circus day, roam wild on both the open plains and in the deep forests of this sea-island paradise. From time immemorial the Singhalese have been taught to capture and train them. Formerly these massive lords of the forests were used only for the processions of kings and religious parades, but they are now trained to work.

They are used for drawing heavy machinery, for clearing new ground, and are even put in harness to do farm work. They are specially useful in building dams across streams and in lifting heavy timbers. The sagacity of a well-trained elephant is truly wonderful. One of them will place big stones in position and gently turn them until their location becomes about as exact as a stone mason would require. In contrast to heavy work like this, another one will be trained to gather fruit, going over the tree carefully with its sensitive trunk, selecting only that fruit which is ripe, and plucking it as neatly as a girl could lift a cherry with her lips.

THE ELEPHANT AT HOME.

However, before entering at too great length into the success of their domestic life, it will be well to observe some of their habits and characteristics while in the jungle. Although its home is generally in a warm and sunny climate, it is not true that the elephant is partial to heat or to light. In Ceylon it shuns the sultry valleys and frequents the elevated plains on the mountain-side where the air is often touched with frost. After vainly searching the hot jungle, hunters have discovered herds of them at a height of 8,000 feet. No altitude seems too lofty for the elephant if it affords an abundance of water. Contrary to general opinion this animal always shuns the glare of the sun and spends the day in the densest foliage it can find, dozing and resting in solitude. At night it seeks water to indulge its passion for the bath. It is believed the animal's partiality for shade is caused partly by weak eyes. All hunters



POSING FOR THE CAMERA.

agree that it relies more on the ear and the sense of smell than on its sight.

Its inability to see perfectly has been demonstrated on numerous occasions when attacked by hunters. One would suppose that a man in contact with such a huge body was doomed, but experience has shown that the hunter under foot has a better chance of escape than one directly in front of the enraged animal. The attention of an elephant in the act of tramping anything under foot is easily diverted. A noise at one side, or the touch of an overhanging branch, is likely to send the infuriated monster crashing away in a panic.

The absolute terror and cowardice of an elephant when confronted by something it cannot see and does not understand is both pitiful and ludicrous. One instance is cited where a scotch terrier seized the trunk of a tame elephant in its teeth and instantly brought the huge creature to its

knees. When the dog repeated the attack the elephant retreated in a panic and would probably have broken down the building in its frantic efforts to get away if the keeper had not interfered. Their feet are very tender and they are always apprehensive of injury to them, which may be an explanation of their dread of dogs. An illustration of the sensitiveness of an elephant's feet has been observed by a tame animal's indifference when a spear was pointed at his head, followed by shrinking timidity when the same weapon was pointed at its feet.

HABITS OF THE MONSTERS.

A herd of elephants traveling together is a family, not a company collected by chance or associated together by accident. Each group of animals is governed by a leader who plans their wanderings, reconnoiters in case of alarm, and advances to lead the defense in case of attack. An elephant is capable of concealing its huge bulk in an

wooden tracing pegs pulled up over night, the tracks indicating that the mischief has been done by elephants. One traveler who was being chased by a "rogue" threw down his valise and made his escape while his massive pursuer halted to break open the bag and examine its contents. Hunters have observed that a wounded elephant will not charge across an intervening hedge, but will run up and down in search of an opening. A mere string suspended from slender posts will protect a field of grain from elephants, the animals' fear of pitfalls seeming to make them wary of all such obstructions, even though the slightest blow would remove them. Elephants will never stay in a jungle during a thunderstorm, their fear of remaining near trees which might be struck by lightning causing them to repair to the open ground.

HOW THE GIANTS ARE CAUGHT.

Although elephant shooting was the standard sport of Ceylon in the earlier days, the herds are now protected by law and their wanton destruction for the mere gratification of sport has ceased. On account of the elephant's usefulness the capture and training of them has become an adroit science. The old way was to lure them into pits, but this procedure was so likely to injure the captives that a safer method has been devised. This consists of driving them into an enclosure called a kraal. The round-up is accomplished by beating the jungle with drums, guns and torches, the line of beaters gradually narrowing toward the mouth of the enclosure, into which the frightened animals rush with the idea that it offers an avenue of escape.

Once inside they are left until their fear and bewilderment begins to subside, when a number of trainers mount on the backs of tame elephants enter the enclosure and proceed to tie the captives to trees or stout stakes. The intelligent part of the tame elephants take in this work is remarkable. Two of them approach a wild one from either side and gradually force him backward toward the stake where he is to be tethered. The prisoner's most furious resistance is unavailing against the cool, patient, intelligent manipulation of the decoys. The roping of a wild elephant is necessarily a difficult task for the men who accomplish it, but the tame ones are so vigilant and sagacious in their assistance that fatalities seldom occur.

THE PROCESS OF TRAINING.

The process of training a wild elephant is simple, nevertheless the results are quite astonishing. For the first few days it is left alone with a tame one tied near to give it confidence. At first the captive will refuse food, but the decoy soon soothes it and persuades it to eat. The first step toward teaching the stranger respect and obedience is to place him between two tame animals, while several men confront him with sharpened irons. As he lunges forward his trunk comes in contact with the points of the weapons and becomes so sore that he soon learns to hold it up or curl it in close out of harm's way. After this first lesson an elephant seldom attempts to use its trunk offensively.

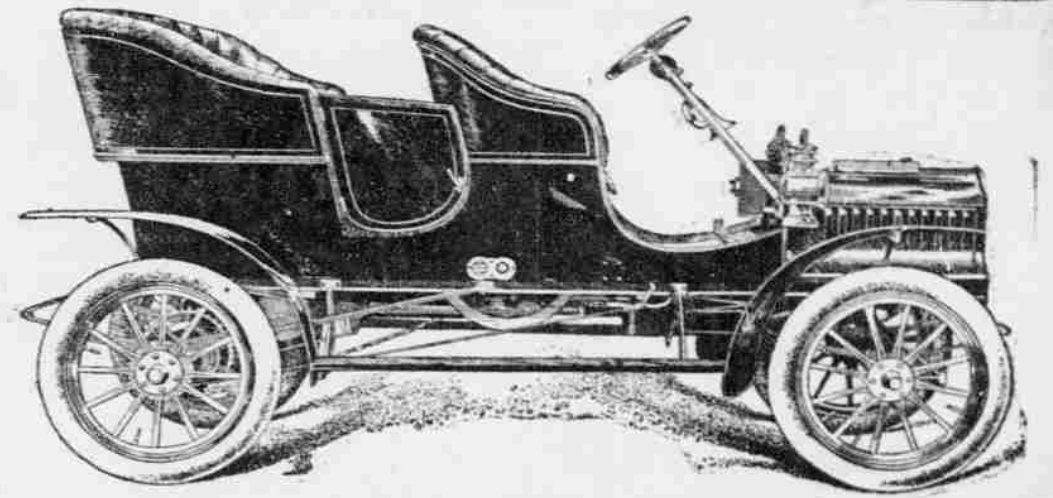
It is taken to water securely tied to two tame animals, and at every attempt to break away is mercilessly prodded in tender places with sharp irons. It is pricked to make it lie down, and the same process is repeated to force it to get up. It soon learns to avoid pain by responding to the threat rather than the act of torture. It is found that elephants which are the most obstinate and violent at first are the quickest to be effectually subdued, while those that are sullen and morose can rarely be trusted in after life.

OFTEN DIE OF BROKEN HEART.

The presence of tame elephants is soon dispensed with and the captive ridden alone by the driver. Although he may appear docile it is not desirable to work him too soon, as there are frequent instances where a valuable animal has lain down and died of a broken heart the first time it was put in harness. Even if he does not die at once from the ignominy of being put to work, a captured elephant is likely to become so fretted when forced to labor that he will sicken and die in a short time.

The first employment an elephant is usually put to is treading clay in a brick yard, or dragging burdens by the side of a tame companion. The sagacity that elephants show in performing labor is extraordinary. Two of them will pile up logs with as much precision and with greater rapidity

(Continued on page 6.)



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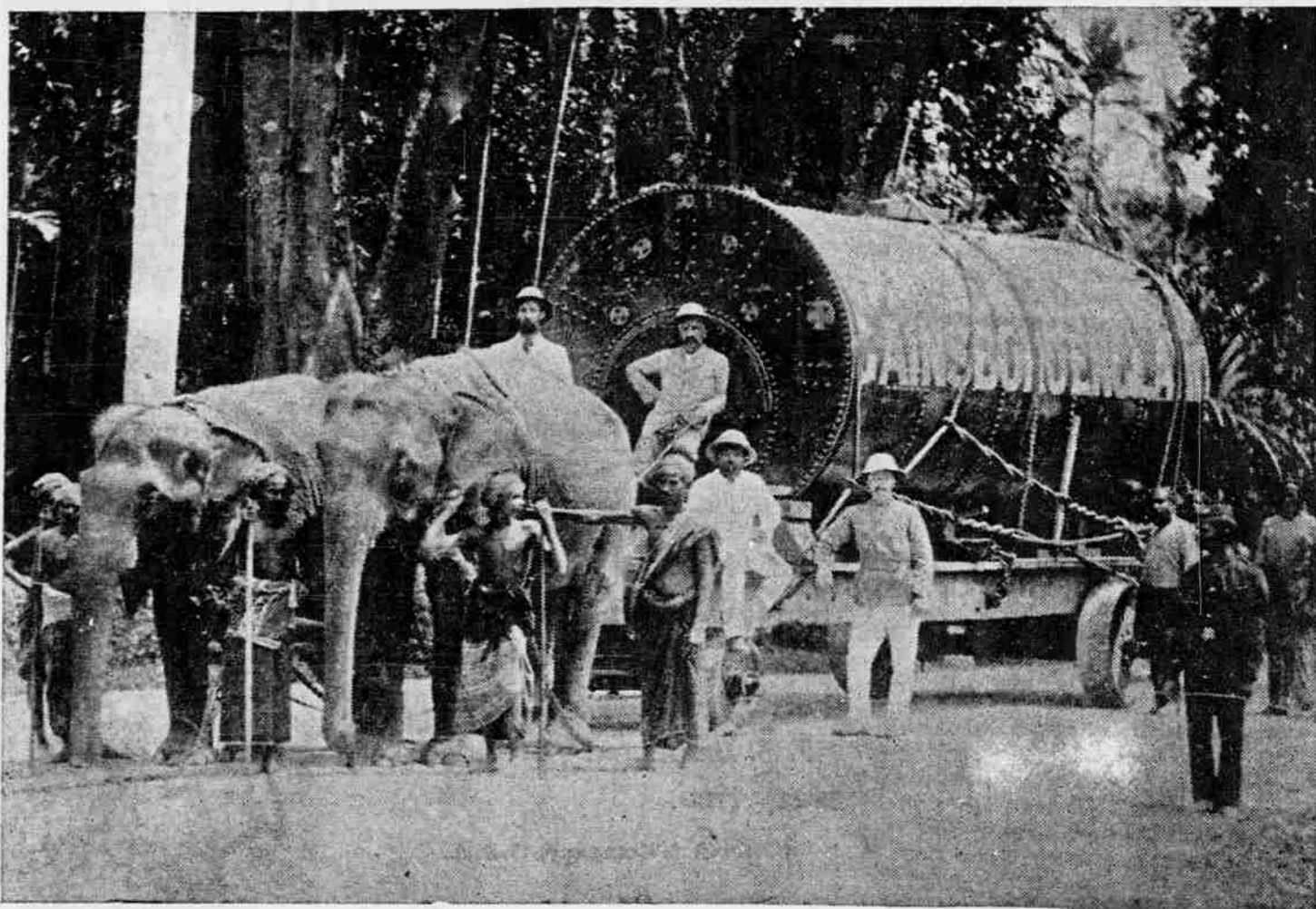


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incredibly small space, and can swiftly traverse the narrowest path provided it renders sure footing. When surprised in the jungle it will make a momentary rush with great noise, followed by sudden and absolute stillness. The inexperienced invariably suppose that the prey has halted to ascertain the cause of alarm, but investigation reveals that the quarry has escaped without making a sound or leaving a trail—an astonishing performance for such a gigantic animal.

Although the elephant is so ponderous it has a gentle disposition. It lives on terms of amity with all animals of the forest, neither regarding them as its foe nor provoking their hostility by attack. It shows no impatience in the company of the elk, the bear or the wild hog, and none of these animals evince any resentment toward the elephant, but let some animal appear in the jungle whose form is not familiar, and a wild rush instantly follows.

"BLACK SHEEP" OF THE JUNGLE.

Those known as "rogue" elephants do not share the docile temperament characteristic of the rest of the herd. The "rogue" is a single animal which for some reason has been denied association with its family, and which is never allowed to attach itself to a strange group. It may browse in the same neighborhood and frequent the same water hole, but the intercourse is never allowed to develop into familiarity. Left to itself the animal seems to become reckless and desperate. It spends its night in marauding, trampling down crops and doing great damage to property. These outcasts are generally males and two of them are never seen together. It is believed that a tame elephant escaping from captivity invariably becomes a "rogue" on account of being unable to join its former companions or to make new alliances.

Caution and curiosity are strong traits in the elephant. Surveying parties engaged in opening roads through the forest frequently find their